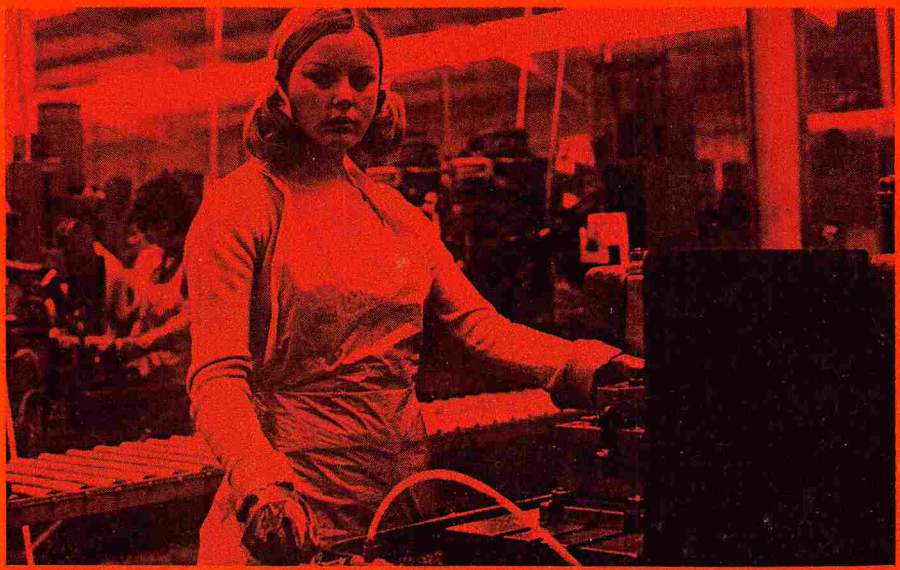
REFORMATION TODAY '76



A CALL TO THE CHURCHES *Front inside cover*

1 EDITORIAL

2 THE LOVE OF GOD FOR THE NON-ELECT *Andrew Swanson*

13 HELPING CHRISTIANS IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

17 REFORMATION IN THE REALM OF WORK *Rod Badams*

24 OLD BOOKS AND THEIR HUNTERS *Peter Cresswell*

27 A PASTOR CELEBRATES A RICH DISCOVERY *Norman Street*

THE WARDROBE AT PERTH *back inside cover*

A call to the churches

We tend to take for granted that the average minister will have well stocked bookshelves. We expect a live church to have a bookstall with an enthusiastic manager. We see the reviews of new books as a normal feature of our magazines and papers. We take it for granted that there is a variety of evangelical publishers supplying us with a constant stream of books, either as reprints of older classics, or as the first productions of new authors.

All this is normal because we are English speaking and enjoy a heritage of evangelical and reformed literature in the English language which is unrivalled. Apart from the Dutch this heritage of books towers above all others. If likened to buildings it would be like all the architecture of London compared to the habitations of Dembidolo. If French was our native tongue we would have a tiny fraction of the vast number of English books available. If we were Italian or Portuguese our difficulty as expositors would be extreme and if Swahili even more acute. It is not enough to be grateful for our privileges, for privileges mean responsibility. That in turn involves a duty to make every effort to see that at least some of the treasures of evangelical literature, which we take for granted, should be made available to other nations. Also Christian authors in other lands should be encouraged to write in their own mother tongue for their own people.

At this point it would be easy to end with a vague piece of pious hopefulness that someone will do something. Wishful thinking however will not put books on the shelves of a Spanish or Nigerian or Kenyan pastor. Action is needed. This brings us to the *Evangelical Press Missionary Trust Fund.*

This fund is quite distinct from the ordinary trading activities of *Evangelical Press*—indeed the hope is that profits from E.P. will subsidise the missionary fund. The aim is to receive money from Christian people for the specific purpose of financing the production of good literature to meet the desperate need in other lands. What we look for is not simply once-for-all gifts (though these will be welcome) but the regular giving of those who will see this as a vital contribution to the existing work of national churches and of missions. It will in no sense compete with such, for in fact it will be national believers and missionaries who will be doing the writing, the translating, and—of equal importance—the distributing.

A good start has been made. Italian translators have been working on books which, it is hoped, will be the forerunners of a continuing flow of evangelical literature for Italy. We are in touch with missionaries in different African countries. The needs are enormous and present us with an insistent call to action.

Your gifts will be welcome. Enquiries about covenanted gifts will be even more so. Most appreciated of all will be the corporate concern of local churches led by pastors who know from experience the vital role of expository literature in the world today.

In the fellowship of the Gospel, Herbert Carson and Erroll Hulse.

Gifts and enquiries should be sent to Evangelical Press, P.O. Box 5, Welwyn, Herts AL6 9NU.

Editorial

PASTOR STREET'S TESTIMONY PUBLISHED IN THIS ISSUE IS A REMINDER OF THE free grace reformation which continues in many countries, a reminder too that when a pastor becomes Reformed his ministry is enriched. What could be better for this whole planet than for an expository ministry to fill all its parts? Do we not pray that the whole earth will be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea? (Hab. 2:14).

This spreading knowledge, the increase of which we intercede for, is not just a head knowledge. It is a knowledge that results in experience. When evangelicals first discover the doctrines of grace their intellectual part is prone to leap ahead, and in some cases (more isolated than is claimed by the enemies of Calvinism) an imbalance ensues. Loose ends are tied up intellectually, but tied up too quickly and sometimes erroneously without adequate biblical consideration. We are indebted to Andrew Swanson, minister of a Baptist Church in Darlington, County Durham, for the thoroughness of his research and for the helpfulness of his article on the love of God. One of the enormous advantages of the Reformed faith is the broad scope of its literature and reference. In working out what we believe we can compare our findings with the labours of others and in this way be prevented from being disfigured spiritually by not holding to the proportions of Scripture.

It is the policy of *Reformation Today* to supply doctrinal articles in modern language and to seek a full and proper emphasis on experience and practice. Included in this issue is an expository contribution by Rod Badams on the basic subject of work. The emphasis our brother places on the equality of secular work with ministerial work is most urgent. We commend this article most highly. Especially is it suitable for those who tend to regard their work as inferior because it is secular.

In the last issue mention was made of Ian Shaw's article on George Whitefield. Very shortly the Banner of Truth is publishing a new book on Whitefield. Such are the demands for perfection that we must tarry yet again for press.

Cover picture. Multitudes toil in factories with work of a repetitive and boring nature. How can such jobs be made more meaningful? To view work in its God-ordained biblical and historical perspective is a great help for a start. Rod Badams deals with that and several other aspects in his article in this issue.

The Love of God for the non-elect

by Andrew Swanson, minister of the Geneva Road Baptist Church, Darlington, County Durham.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF REASONS WHY I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO PREPARE material on this theme. In the first place it is a subject I have viewed with interest for a number of years; and about which I've been very concerned to obtain as clear an understanding as possible. Secondly, the results of my study have led me to the conclusion that, 'the love of God for the non-elect' is an integral part of Reformed theology and any failure to do justice to this biblical truth is a deviation from the mainstream of Reformed theology. Thirdly, this subject has a distinct bearing upon the purity of the gospel message. A defective understanding of this truth will inevitably lead to an impoverished gospel. Finally, I believe that a preacher's understanding of this truth will have a profound influence upon the manner in which he proclaims the gospel.

I want firstly to expound this doctrine in terms of scriptural data with a selection of quotations from Puritan and Reformed writers to illustrate my contention that this doctrine is an integral part of Reformed Theology. Secondly, I want to consider some practical applications this doctrine raises.

To begin with we must be clear about what is meant by 'the love of God to the non-elect'. In what sense can we claim God loves the non-elect? If he does, is the character of that love the same as that bestowed upon the elect? The scriptural answers are quite clear; the answer to the first part of the question is yes, God does love the non-elect, while the answer to the second is no, this love is not the same as that bestowed upon the elect. In other words, we maintain that there are two aspects of the love of God and that the elect benefit from both aspects while the non-elect benefit only from one of them.

R. L. Dabney gives the following definition of God's love and its distinguishing aspects:

> Love is God's active (but passionless) affection, by which he delights in his creatures, and in their well-being, and delights consequently in conferring it. It is usually distinguished into love of complacency, and love of benevolence. The former is a moral emotion (though in God passionless), being his holy delight in holy qualities in his creatures. The latter is but his goodness manifesting itself, actively. The first loves the holy being on account of his excellence. The second loves the sinner in spite of his wickedness.[1]

This distinction is an important one and has a clear biblical warrant. A

very good example of the need for such a distinction will be found in any lucid exposition of Matthew 5:43-48. The argument of this whole section rests on the statement in verse 45, 'That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' (A.V.).

The child of God is to love indiscriminately. He is to love even his enemies and the motive for such love is given in the words, 'that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven'. The child of God is not to act like the Pharisee and limit his Christian duty of love to a certain class. The rebuke to Christians who would limit their love 'to the brethren' is the same as Christ gives to the Pharisees in verses 46-47. 'If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?' (N.I.V.). No, the Christian is to love his neighbour as himself and he must define neighbour in terms of Christ's parable of the good Samaritan. Professor Murray in his *Principles of Conduct* expounds the motive of such love in this way, 'As sons of the Father they must reflect the character of him who has adopted and begotten them; they must resemble him in attitude, disposition, and conduct . . . to be like God in the sense of reflecting his image in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness is the essence of divine obligation and the glory of human virtue.'[2]

The love we must have for all men is to be patterned after the love of God to all men which is illustrated in the phrase, 'for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust'. This is God's love of benevolence. It is a love that is not conditioned by the objects of its attention; a love that manifests itself in goodness to men without any reference to their moral standing. Returning to Dabney's definition, the love of benevolence is his goodness manifesting itself actively, a love that can embrace the sinner in spite of his wickedness. This is what Reformed theology refers to when it talks of the love of God to the non-elect. They are loved with the love of benevolence.

It is not my intention to spend time considering God's love of complacency but I must briefly allude to it as it has relevance for our further discussion of his love for the non-elect. The love of complacency is a moral emotion, and therefore, unlike the love of benevolence, it takes note of the moral standing of its object. There are two such moral emotions that may literally be attributed to God, namely, love and wrath. Concerning these W. G. T. Shedd remarks,

> These two emotions are real and essential in God; the one wakened by righteousness, and the other by sin. The existence of the one necessitates that of the other; so that if there be no love of righteousness, there is no anger at sin, and conversely, if there be no anger at sin, there is no love of righteousness.[3]

The purpose of making reference to this aspect of God's love is to draw

attention to its relationship with his love of benevolence. The fountain head of love, in both its aspects, lies in the essential nature of God, 'God is love' (1 John 4:16). With fallen mankind the order of God's love is that he embraces all with a sovereign love of benevolence. This sovereign love of benevolence is a distinguishing love: it is a gracious love: it is a love that grants infinitely greater blessings to some than it does to others. It is a love whose outworking is solely governed by the sovereign will and purpose of God.

On the other hand God's love of complacency is an aspect of love directed only to the elect and solely on account of their sovereign election 'in Christ'. An example of this aspect of love is found in Romans 9:13, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' I believe that the efforts of a number of commentators to tone down the second clause of this statement to mean, 'Esau have I loved less' are quite unnecessary, and would have been avoided if it were noted that love and hate are used in this context to signify a moral emotion in God. Jacob is the object of a complacent love that Esau never was or could be, simply because, by election, Jacob was fitted for such love while, by non-election, Esau was only fit for the just wrath of God. The mistake we must avoid, however, is to jump to the conclusion that Esau, as representative of the non-elect, because he is the object of God's righteous wrath can therefore in no sense be the object of God's love. While it is true, owing to non-election, that Esau and all the non-elect can never enjoy God's love of complacency, they do enjoy in varying degrees many of the choice blessings that flow from God's love of benevolence.

It is very important that our conception of the sovereign electing love of God in no way leads us to disparage the love of God that the non-elect do enjoy. It is a real love, an undeserved love and a great blessing, even if the non-elect wickedly fail to recognise it as such. God's love for the non-elect includes much more than mere goodness, much more than simply the material blessings suggested by the phrase in Matthew 5:45, 'He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' We must view God's love to these people as including, in varying degrees, the choice blessings of his genuine compassion, mercy and longsuffering.

The mainstream of Reformed thinking would go one step further than this in seeking to give an accurate conception of God's love to the non-elect. It would say, in a variety of ways, that the essential difference between God's love of the elect and that of the non-elect is that his love for the elect purposes and works out their salvation while for the non-elect it merely desires their salvation. Many examples of this sentiment may be found in W. G. T. Shedd's treatment of the divine decrees, here is one of them:

> God desires that the non-elect would turn of himself, by the spontaneous action of his own will under the operation of common grace. He would rejoice in such

a conversion. The entreaty, 'Turn ye, why will ye die,' springs out of this desire. That this entreaty of God fails in this case is owing to the sinner, and therefore does not prove that God is insincere in his desire. . . . The fact that God does not in the case of the non-elect bestow special grace, to overcome the resisting self-will that renders the gifts of providence and common grace ineffectual, does not prove that he is insincere in his desire that man would believe under the influence of common grace; any more than the fact that a benevolent man declines to double the amount of his gift, after the gift already offered has been spurned, proves that he did not sincerely desire that the person would take the sum first offered.[4]

Some would question whether you can go so far as to say that the love of God in any sense desires the salvation of the non-elect. I believe you can say this and I want to quote the testimony of a selection of Reformed writings on this point.

Reformed writings

R. L. Dabney makes the foundation of his views on this subject very clear.

> The decree of reprobation is then, in its essence, a simple preterition. It is indeed intelligent and intentional in God. He leaves them out of his efficacious plan and purpose of mercy, not out of general inattention or overlooking of them, but knowingly and sovereignly. Yet objectively this act is only negative, because God does nothing to those thus passed by, to make their case any worse, or to give any additional momentum to their downward course. He leaves them as they are. Yea, incidentally, he does them many kindnesses, extends to multitudes of them the calls of his Word, and even the remonstrances of his Spirit, preventing them from becoming as wicked as they would otherwise have been. But the practical or efficacious part of his decree is simply that he will not 'make them willing in the day of his power'.[5]

I note his view on reprobation at this point simply to illustrate that he held, what I believe to be a scriptural view, thoroughly consistent with his views on the love of God to the non-elect.

These views are expressed in a paper entitled *God's Indiscriminate Proposals of Mercy as Related to His Power, Wisdom, and Sincerity.* In this paper he sets out to give an answer to the question, 'If God makes proposals of mercy to men, who he foresees will certainly reject them and perish, and who he immutably purposes to leave without effectual calling, how can his power and wisdom be cleared, save at the expense of his sincerity or his sincerity at the expense of his wisdom or power?'[6]

The crucial point upon which the whole of Dabney's discussion turns is his endeavour to expose the assumption 'that as God had no volition toward the salvation of the non-elect, so he could not have any propension or affection at all towards it'.[7]

First Dabney expresses the way in which the Arminian, on the one extreme, and the Hyper-Calvinist on the other would resolve the difficulties

that arise from the acknowledged fact that multitudes who hear the gospel are lost,

> Says the strong Arminian: 'Since God is sovereign, and also true and sincere, therefore I know that, when he declares his compassion for "him that dieth", he has exerted all the power that even omnipotence can properly exert on "free-will" to turn that sinner to life.' Thus this party sustains God's sincerity at the expense of his omnipotence. The party of the other extreme says: 'Because God is sovereign and omnipotent, therefore we know that, were there any pity in him for "the sinner that dieth", that affection would inevitably have applied almighty grace, which would have turned him without fail to life; so that we must explain the merciful declaration as meaning something else than it seems.' Thus they save God's omnipotence and sovereignty at the expense of his sincerity.

Dabney then goes on to show the answer he would give to those proposals,

> The correct answer to the Arminian is, to show him that the existence of a real and unfeigned pity in God for 'him that dieth', does not imply that God has exhausted his divine power in vain to renew the creatures 'freewill' in a way consistent with its nature, because the pity may have been truly in God, and yet countervailed by superior motives, so that he did not will to exert his omnipotence for that sinners renewal. The other extreme receives the same reply; the absence of an omnipotent, and inevitably efficient, volition to renew that soul does not prove the absence of a true compassion in God for him; and for the same reason the propension may have been in God, but restrained from rising into a volition by superior rational motives.[8]

Dabney considers a number of texts, e.g. Ezekiel 18:32, 33:11, Psalm 81:13, Luke 19:41,42 which he describes as 'touching appeals'. Concerning these and other texts of similar sentiment he remarks,

> To speak after the manner of men, have all these apparently touching appeals after all no heart in them? We cannot but deem it an unfortunate logic which constrains a man to this view of them. How much more simple and satisfactory to take them for just what they express?—evidences of a true compassion, which yet is restrained, in the case of the unknown class, the non-elect, by consistent and holy reasons, from taking the form of a volition to regenerate.[9]

Dabney draws attention to a work of the Puritan John Howe, entitled *The Reconcilableness of God's Prescience of the sins of men with the wisdom and sincerity of his counsels, exhortations, and whatsoever other means he uses to prevent them.* Another relevant work by Howe is a brief treatise on Luke 19:41,42 entitled, *The Redeemer's Tears Wept over Lost Souls.*

Howe says in this passage:

> We ascribe nothing, if we do not ascribe to God a real unwillingness that men should sin on and perish; and consequently, a real willingness that they should turn to him and live, which so many plain texts assert. And therefore it is unavoidably imposed upon us, to believe that God is truly unwilling of somethings, which he doth not think fit to interpose his omnipotency to hinder, and is truly willing of some things, which he doth not put forth his omnipotency to effect: that he most fitly makes this the ordinary course of his dispensations towards men, to govern them by laws, and promises, and threatenings (made most express to them that live under the gospel), to work upon their minds, their hope and their fear; affording them the ordinary assistance of supernatural light and influence with which he requires them to comply, and which, upon their refusing to do so,

he may most righteously withhold, and give them the victory to their own ruin; though oftentimes he doth, from a sovereignty of grace, put forth that greater power upon others, equally negligent and obstinate, not to enforce, but effectually to incline their wills, and gain a victory over them to their salvation.[10]

Howe lists a number of anthropomorphic expressions that the Scriptures ascribe to God and then remarks:

> Such expressions as these, though they are borrowed from man, must be understood suitably to God; though they do not signify the same thing with him as they do in us, yet they do not signify nothing. As when hands and eyes are attributed to God, they do not signify as they do with us, yet they signify somewhat correspondent, as active and visive power; so these expressions, though they signify not in God such unquiet motions and passions as they would in us, they do signify a mind and will really, though with the most perfect calmness and tranquillity, set against sin and the horrid consequences of it; which yet, for greater reasons than we can understand, he may not see fit to do all he can to prevent. And if we know not how to reconcile such a will in God with some of our notions concerning the Divine nature, shall we, for what we have thought of him, deny what he hath so expressly said of himself or pretend to understand his nature better than he himself doth.[11]

In these remarks Howe is seeking to demonstrate that the non-elect do enjoy a real measure of the love of God as it is manifested in a genuine compassion and pity.

Of all the writings on this subject the most lucid and explicit statements I have read are to be found in sections of Shedd's Dogmatics particularly the Divine Attributes, the Divine Decrees, and Vicarious Atonement.

Shedd's great contribution to this discussion lies in his clear thinking with regard to the blessings the non-elect ought to receive from the gospel ministry. The major mistake I fear a number of Reformed thinkers fall into is failing to acknowledge the genuine call of God to the non-elect to forsake their sins and find salvation in Christ. The mistake is made simply by assuming that unless God gives an effectual call it is not a genuine call. Shedd argues against this mistake in these words, 'Surely, the fact that God does not think proper to add a second degree of grace in order to overcome the sinners resistance of the first degree of grace, does not prove that God is insincere in his desire for the sinners conversion under the first degree of grace.'[12]

What Shedd is very concerned to stress regarding the non-elect who enjoy the benefit of a gospel ministry is that they are culpable for resisting and rejecting the overtures of the gospel.

> Reprobated persons are striven with by the Holy Spirit, and are convicted of sin, but they resist these strivings, and the Holy Spirit proceeds no further with them. In his sovereignty, he decides not to overcome their resistance of common grace. The non-elect are the subjects of common grace, to which they oppose a strenuous and successful determination of their own will. Every sinner is stronger than common grace, but not stronger than regenerating grace.[13]

A little later, dealing with the same theme he powerfully illustrates the enormity of this sin in these words, 'A sinner who has repulsed the mercy

of God in common grace, and demands that God grant a yet larger degree, virtually says to the Infinite One: "Thou hast tried once to convert me from sin; now try again, and try harder." '[14]

Should some seek to excuse the non-elect's blame on the grounds of God's decree . . . to withhold special grace. Shedd has the ready reply,

> The efficient and blame worthy cause of the perdition of the non-elect is not the decree of preterition, but the self-determined apostasy and sin of the non-elect. Mere permission is not causation. . . . The sentence of the last day will not be founded upon God's negative act of not saving, but upon the sinner's positive act of sinning. Christ will not say to the impenitent, 'Depart, because I did not save thee,' but, 'Depart, because thou hast sinned, and hast no sorrow for it'. Should John Doe throw himself into the water and be drowned, while Richard Roe stood upon the bank and did nothing, the verdict would be that the act was suicide, not homicide: 'Drowned, not because Richard Roe did not pull him out, but because John Doe threw himself in.' It is true that Richard Roe, in this instance, would be guilty of a neglect of duty towards God, in not saving the life of John Doe, but he would not be guilty of the murder of John Doe. Richard Roe's non-performance of his duty towards God, would not transfer the guilt of John Doe's act of self-murder to him. Were God under an obligation to save the sinner, the decree of preterition would be unjustifiable. It would be a neglect of duty. But salvation is grace, not debt; and therefore the decision not to bestow it, is an act of justice without mercy. 'On them that fell, severity,' or exact justice, is inflicted (Rom. 11:22).[15]

So far in my presentation of the contribution of Shedd to this subject there is little explicit appeal to scripture. To remedy this omission I now intend to quote at length a part of his writings that will clearly demonstrate that his teaching on this subject is thoroughly biblical.

> The natural spontaneous desire of God towards all men, the non-elect as well as the elect, is expressed in Ezekiel 33:11; 18:32. 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure (Hebrew: *chaphets*—to desire) in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his evil way and live. I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.' This Divine desire is constitutional. It springs from the compassionate love of the Creator towards the soul of the creature, and is founded in the essential benevolence of the Divine nature. But this general and abiding desire is distinguishable from the realisation or gratification of it by a particular decision in a particular instance. It is conceivable that God may sincerely desire that Judas Iscariot would believe on Christ, and repent of sin, and yet for some sufficient reason decide not to overcome his opposition, and incline him to the act of faith.
>
> Christ, in deep sincerity and in tears, said: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not' (Luke 13:34; 19:41). He unquestionably desired that the inhabitants of Jerusalem would yield to that degree of common grace with which they had been blest, and would repent and believe on him; and he unquestionably could have exerted upon them that degree of uncommon grace, by which he is 'the author and finisher of faith' (Heb. 12:2); and by which he demonstrates that 'all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth' (Matt. 28:18). Yet he did not exert his power to overcome the obstinacy and resistance of the human will in this instance. Those inhabitants of Jerusalem over whom he had wept were passed by in the bestowment of regenerating grace, but not of common.[16]

Throughout the whole of Shedd's teaching on the Divine decrees a recurring theme is his emphasis upon the reality of the blessing of common grace to the non-elect. No theologian, as far as I am aware, has paid higher tribute to the value of common grace than Shedd does in the following statement, 'If common grace should prevail over the sinners resistance, it would be saving grace.'[17]

Again, 'The non-elect receive common grace, and common grace would incline the human will if it were not defeated by the human will. If the sinner should make no hostile opposition, common grace would be equivalent to saving grace.'[18]

While some may disagree with such a statement any misunderstanding of what he means is unnecessary as he most lucidly and unambiguously expounds this thought in his supplementary volume of dogmatic theology as follows:

> Christ (Luke 10:13) declares that if the common grace granted to Chorazin and Bethsaida, which was ineffectual with them, had been granted to Tyre and Sidon, it would have been effectual with these. The miracles together with the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit which produced no repentance in the former case, he says would have produced it in the latter. According to this statement of our Lord, the very same amount of Divine influence may succeed in overcoming a sinner's opposition in one instance, and not in another. When it succeeds it is effectual and irresistable grace; when it fails, it is ineffectual and resistable. This shows that grace is to be measured relatively by the result, and not absolutely by a stiff rule which states arithmetically the amount of power exerted. All grace that fails, be it greater or less, is common; all that succeeds, be it greater or less, is special.
>
> In order to have effected repentance in the people of Chorazin, it would have been necessary to exert a higher degree of grace than was exerted upon them; while in order to effect repentance in the people of Tyre, no higher degree would have been requisite than that exerted upon Chorazin. But it is to be carefully noticed that the failure in the instance of Chorazin was owing wholly to the sinful resistance made to the grace; and the success in the instance of Tyre would be owing not to any assistance of the grace by the co-operation of the sinful will of Tyre, but wholly to the overcoming of Tyre's resistance by the grace exerted. The sinful will of the inhabitants of Tyre, in the supposed case, was a wholly resisting will like that of the inhabitants of Chorazin, and hence could not synergise with the Divine Spirit any more than theirs could, but the degree of resistance, according to our Lord's statement, was less.[19]

With this I conclude the first section. I have selected only a fraction from the wealth of material on the subject. For example I have omitted completely any reference to Charnock's *Attributes of God* which I recommend.

Important implications of this teaching

There are three areas of practical application I would draw from the teaching of Reformed theology on the love of God to the non-elect. Firstly, the bearing this doctrine has on the content of the gospel. Second-

ly, the effect this doctrine should have upon the character of pastors. Finally, understanding of this truth should have a profound influence over the manner in which the gospel is proclaimed.

Taking Dabney, Howe and Shedd as representative of Reformed theology on this subject, the outstanding feature of their contribution is their obvious concern to be faithful to the whole counsel of God.

They have no aversion to logical inferences or deductions that may legitimately be drawn from the Scriptures. On the other hand they make no endeavour to create a system of theology that is perfectly consistent with the reason of man. Their aim is not for a strictly logical system but rather a strictly biblical one. Logic is allowed its legitimate place but it is not allowed to pervert the plain meaning of Scripture for the sake of a more rationalistic theology. Where Scripture appears to maintain conflicting doctrines that cannot be logically reconciled, they do not resort to neutralising one doctrine at the expense of the other. In other words, they recognise what J. I. Packer, in his book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* calls a 'theological antinomy'.[20] This is the heart beat of Reformed theology at its best. It constrains human reason to bow to the authority of the Word of God. It will not allow God's Word to be tampered with in the interests of a theological system with no loose ends. The only bondage true Reformed theology will allow is that of the accurate exegesis of the oracles of God.

The distinctive mark of Reformed preaching therefore is not a man's close adherence to the historic confessions and creeds of Reformed theology but his close adherence to the real meaning of the particular portion of God's Word that is being expounded. In gospel preaching pastors must never get into the bondage of feeling that every sermon we preach must reflect our basic theological position.

Let me put it another way. Preachers must have no qualms about presenting any aspect of the gospel message that they believe has a solid scriptural foundation. For example, in the congregation will be certain people who can see no further than the five points of Calvinism. Now if the expositions are consistently faithful to the Scriptures, it is almost certain there will be criticism, 'bit arminian! bit hyper! bit mixed up! he contradicts himself!' Pastors should ignore such criticism! Never get to the place of bondage where you begin to tailor the truth to suit the defective views of the critics, in order to maintain a reputation as a good Calvinist. If we are truly concerned about being Reformed, it is not the opinion of others that counts. Does it really matter how someone labels me if I can say with a clear conscience, 'it is my constant endeavour to maintain and defend the Reformed faith and supremely it is my endeavour to rightly understand the Word of Truth in the fear of God'.

If preachers seek to be Reformed in the sense I am maintaining I believe the Spirit's blessing will be upon the content of the sermon and will give

it the note of authority. Being Reformed in this sense means that when we seek power and authority for the preaching of the Word we remember we are invoking the aid of the *Spirit of Truth* and it is the truth alone we may expect him to bless.

Then we should ask the question, how much does my belief in the love of God to the non-elect influence my attitude to the perishing all around me? Do these people know that God cares for them from the evidence of my endeavours to bring them to a knowledge of the truth? Is there any reflection of the love of God for these people in my life? What measure of conformity to the Spirit of Christ have I attained to in respect to my attitude to sinners on their way to eternal perdition? What do we know of a heart that is moved with compassion when we daily come in contact with people who are as sheep without a shepherd. Are we consistent in believing that God delights in the conversion and eternal life of the sinner? Are we earnestly labouring to use all the legitimate means to that end? Richard Baxter is so relevant here and reproves us.

> How many around you are blindly hastening to perdition, while your voice is appointed to be the means of arousing and reclaiming them! The physician hath no excuse who is doubly bound to relieve the sick, when even every neighbour is bound to help them. Brethren, what if you heard sinners cry after you in the streets, 'O sir, have pity on me, and afford me your advice! I am afraid of the everlasting wrath of God. I know I must shortly leave this world, and I am afraid lest I shall be miserable in the next.' Could you deny your help to such poor sinners? What if they came to your study-door, and cried for help, and would not go away till you had told them how to escape the wrath of God? Could you find in your hearts to drive them away without advice? I am confident you could not. Why, alas! such persons are less miserable than they who will not cry for help. It is the hardened sinner who cares not for your help, that most needs it: and he that hath not so much life as to feel that he is dead, nor so much light as to see his danger, nor so much sense left as to pity himself —this is the man that is most to be pitied.
>
> (*The Reformed Pastor* Banner of Truth edition, p. 198.)

What about those who sit lifeless under the ministry each Lord's Day? How much does this sight stir me up to seek God's mercy upon them? My great fear is that all too often their indifference breeds general indifference. I have to ask myself periodically, what do I know about 'great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart' over perishing sinners. Can I say with the Apostle Paul regarding the unconverted that 'my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they might be saved'. Does the secret place bear witness to my broken hearted pleading with God for their conversion? My Lord wept over impenitent souls: do I know anything of that spirit when I bring the impenitent souls to the throne of grace? These are questions all believers ought regularly to be asking themselves. Ought we not to examine and see if our lives are consistent with the theology we hold dear?

We should constantly remind ourselves that we must never be guilty of indifference to the results of the preaching. To borrow the words of

Spurgeon, 'If we do not win souls, we should mourn as the husbandman who sees no harvest, as the fisherman who returns to his cottage with an empty net, or as the huntsman who has in vain roamed over hill and dale.' Ours should be Isaiah's language, uttered with many a sigh and groan—'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' The ambassadors of peace should not cease to weep bitterly until sinners weep for their sin.[21]

We must convey to those we meet that we care for their souls, that it is not a matter of indifference to us whether they are saved or not. In Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book *Preaching and Preachers* he makes this very valid point, 'The trouble with some of us is that we love preaching, but we are not always careful to make sure we love the people to whom we are actually preaching. If you lack this element of compassion for the people you will also lack the pathos which is a very vital element in all true preaching' (p. 92).

This crucial element that should be present in all true preaching is, I fear, one of the great deficiencies of our day. We can praise God for a revived interest in Reformed theology; we can praise God for growing appreciation of the value of expository preaching; but at the present moment we have great cause to lament that so few preachers convey a sense of urgency and deep concern over the salvation of those to whom they preach. Have you ever heard a preacher declare, 'You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it, when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction; and for aught you know, you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you.' These are the words of George Whitefield. And the person who recorded them remarked, 'I hardly ever knew him (Whitefield) to go through a sermon without weeping, more or less, and I truly believe his tears were the tears of sincerity.'[22] As you are all aware, Whitefield was just one of many who were moved in this way when they preached. It is not the tears that I would stress but the note of warmth, entreaty and urgency in these preachers. They preached as ambassadors for Christ, beseeching men in Christ's stead 'be ye reconciled to God'. As far as I am aware C. H. Spurgeon did not weep when he preached, but the yearning for the sinner's conversion is a marked feature in most of his sermons. Hear him as he brings one of his sermons to a conclusion:

> Come sinner, come and try. If Christ did not drive me away, he will never spurn you. Come along, poor soul, come along—
>
> 'Venture on him (tis no venture), venture wholly
> Let no other trust intrude;
> None but Jesus
> Can do helpless sinners good.'
>
> He can do thee all the good thou wantest: oh trust my Master, oh! trust my Master; he is a precious Lord Jesus; he is a loving Saviour, he is a kind and condescending forgiver of sin. Come, ye black; come ye filthy; come ye poor;

(*continued on page* 32)

An interview with the editor of 'Slavonia' a journal describing Christian work in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Helping Christians in Communist Countries

What Communist Countries have you been able to visit?

During the past ten years I have experienced the leading of God to Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Russia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia—in that order. The group to which I belong covers more countries than this and each of us tends to specialise in one or two of them.

Do you think you have formed a reliable impression of church life under Communism?

The founder of our group commenced his operations in 1922 when Eastern Europe was not under Communist control. Consequently during the years leading up to the outbreak of war in 1939 he was able to form very many intimate friendships with the most active Christians in these lands. He resumed his visits in 1959, not as a novice, but as an experienced linguist, traveller and messenger of the churches in those parts. Since he was no longer a stranger but an old and highly esteemed friend, confidence was assured. We who have followed this pioneer have simply built upon his extensive knowledge and friendships. Knowing him, we have had immediate access in the completest confidence to hundreds of the most faithful and exemplary believers it is possible one will ever meet this side of glory. Naturally one has also had to use such powers of discernment and wisdom as Providence has seen fit to bestow in assessing fresh fields, situations and contacts. We have built on the heritage our founder has passed on to us, and in so doing, have formed our own estimate of things while listening also to the experience of other groups. These three empirical chains of evidence have enabled us to arrive at a satisfactory picture of the state of the church under Communism in Europe. We speak of that which we have seen and heard but also value data from all reliable sources because things never stay static for long in these lands.

What features strike you most about these churches?

Firstly that they are peopled by men and women of like passions as ourselves, but with this difference—trial, tribulation and sometimes even persecution are congenial conditions for Christian growth and graces! Secondly that virtually all the problems which confront us in our churches confront them too. After all, the church in this world is always under attack, be it in East or West, for Satan has his plan of campaign for its subjugation in all places, though he cannot achieve its extinction. Thirdly, and by contrast to our own situation, one is aware, sometimes acutely so, that every soul who has joined the church has done so out of conviction, perhaps through much bitter pain and loss, and has thereby taken a clear stand for one belief over against another, for one set of values and ideals over and against another, for One Lord and Saviour over and against another—whom they avow is *not* another! Costly, very costly discipleship, but how different from our own profession here at home!

We hear a lot about the 'Underground Church' and persecution—what are your views about this?

My experience may not be typical, but I have to state the remarkable fact that those who are the most ardent (perhaps vehement would be more apposite)

defenders of the existence and validity of the underground church are those who have never even been inside a communist country! Pastor Wurmbrand introduced the term, 'underground church,' to the West during the early sixties. His book, *Tortured for Christ*, which achieved a huge circulation in the English-speaking world propounds, even propagandises this idea. Other exiles notably from Bulgaria have spoken in similar vein. However when a definition of the term is sought it would appear that it is used to describe the secret activities of a number of individuals working partly within, and partly without, the officially recognised churches. In Eastern Europe the churches are allowed to preach, pray and baptise converts. This is not to say that the state gives them a free hand—it tries in all manner of ways to limit their growth and discourages its citizens from attending church. But the churches have no need to go underground because their existence is not forbidden. In China today such may be the case, but not in Europe, with the exception of Albania. Much is made of the fact that there has existed in Russia since 1960, and probably on a smaller scale before that, an 'Unregistered' Baptist church. Perhaps this most closely resembles an underground church though its activities are an open secret even in the West! Many a time I have discovered Christians working secretly and discreetly in Eastern Europe but it has seldom been unconnected with their fellow believers in their own churches. A two-fold ministry (official and unofficial) is going on all the time within the officially recognised churches, but this does not happen without the knowledge and consent of the churches—very often just the reverse, since their Pastors are foremost in such work! I have myself often taken part in such 'unofficial' meetings of the churches, but not for one moment did I regard it as an 'underground' meeting, nor did they!

Turning to the question of persecution, again one has to define one's terms. To the Westerner it might mean losing the right to the higher grades in one's place of employment. But to the East European believer, those kinds of pressures and discriminations are all part of the price he has accepted as an inevitable part of the cross he must take up in order to follow Christ. If one were to define persecution in terms of Hebrews 11:33-38 one would say that apart from a few reported instances in Russia and Bulgaria this is now the exception rather than the rule at present. Pressures, threats, discriminations, harassments there are, but many believers who have endured such things regard them more as privileges than humiliations!

What doctrinal position do the Churches you have visited hold?

Apart from the Hungarian Reformed Church and the Czech Brethren which have Calvinist traditions all the rest are evangelical Arminian. But this is not so much by conviction as the result of a sheer absence of teaching concerning the reformed faith. However any lack of clarity is often made up for by a whole-hearted, radiant discipleship, beauteous in its simplicity. Knowing and pleasing God, being faithful unto death and striving for the purity of the church are their priorities. Modernism is most rife in Hungary and Czechoslovakia and inevitably so is Barthianism. The Evangelicals are strong minorities within these established churches but are gradually growing in strength.

What would you recommend to Christians visiting these countries?

Firstly seek to establish before the Lord in utter and stark honesty what are your real motives for wanting to go. Secondly talk over the whole matter with someone who has already been, so that you may obtain factual advice about the situation there and what are the main 'do's and don't's'. Thirdly discuss it with your pastor, elders and possibly the church so that you may have their opinion in the matter and if this is favourable, their wholehearted support. Lastly, if you are sure God is wanting you to make the journey, go in a spirit of meekness, trust and patience, seeking to serve the brethren in lowliness of

mind even if it is only 'a cup of cold water' to a thirsty one who needs it. If these things are observed your labours will not be in vain. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling!

You mention the group to which you belong, could you tell us a little about who is in it and what your aims are?

The group comprises an average cross-section of British evangelicals: business men, civil servants, architects, a pastor or two, an evangelist, students and teachers. The number varies from year to year depending on how many applicants, particularly students, we may have. Our aim quite simply is to have fellowship with believers in Communist countries. Fellowship really means sharing, and we discover that this means giving and receiving at all possible levels—spiritual, material, emotional and even intellectual! They minister to us from what the Lord has taught them and we from what he has given us. Fellowship should be a two-way affair and we find a tremendous spiritual stimulus in its realisation in Eastern Europe.

Can you give some examples of the witness of East European Christians which have struck you most forcibly?

Firstly, *Bravery.* Whilst in a large city in the USSR I made contact with Christians through the local church and I was closely followed there by the 'plain-clothes' police. After the service I was invited out to lunch by one of the believers but felt I should point out the risks he was running by so doing. He dismissed this obstacle by saying, 'I'm not afraid if you aren't!' We were subjected to intimidation by these policemen almost to the point of arrest, especially as we went up stairs in his block of flats. He was obviously surprised by their overt tactics but undeterred. We had lunch and tea together with his family and other friends, the visit lasting several hours. I observed that the street outside was deserted save for some 'sentries' hanging around hour after hour. When the time finally came for me to return to my Hotel I bade them all farewell expecting that I would take my leave of them there inside the safety of the flat. But my host insisted on coming down stairs with me, then out into the empty street and there in full view of our secret police 'friends' he shook me warmly by the hand! We parted and I walked off down the street expecting at every step to be arrested. It was only when I had reached the safe haven of my hotel room that I realised who had most reason to be afraid. It was not me at all but my brave host. Tomorrow I would be flying home but he was here for keeps! He had shown 'them' that he was my friend and he had done it openly. This was bravery indeed.

Secondly, *Returning good for evil.* A young man who had objected to state interference in the affairs of the church had been expelled from his theological faculty. He had to endure numerous interrogations at police headquarters. He always behaved with courteousy, patience and meekness toward his inquisitors—he has a most loving and gentle spirit. This apparently infuriated one of them who took our young friend by the shoulders and literally banged his head against the wall several times. When their investigations had been concluded he was released. The following Christmas Eve our friend was alone at his place of work—he was a kind of night watchman. Much to his surprise, who should come quietly in from the street but his severest inquisitor now in civilian dress and accompanied by a young child. It was the very one who had bashed his head against the wall! He proceeded to shake our friend warmly by the hand, wished him a Happy Christmas and then told his little child to give the 'Uncle' a kiss for Christmas! What had made such a tough-guy express such soft and tender sentiments? What had touched him? I believe it was the experience of witnessing under the most extreme conditions, the example of one who instead of returning evil for evil showed love, patience and a complete absence of

malice. Christ suffers in his members and causes even the most callous to exclaim, 'Truly this was a son of God!'

What are your views on Bible smuggling?

The dictionary definition says that smuggling is the 'illegal' import or export of goods etc., without paying duty. This year one of our young students embarking on his first visit to Eastern Europe said that he was anxious not to do anything illegal. I asked him if he thought any Government had the right to prohibit the Word of God? He was silent, because the answer was self-evident. No Government has any right to interfere in the life of the church. God is higher than all Governments and in matters spiritual we acknowledge only One Lord who alone regulates and rules his church. I therefore cannot acknowledge the 'illegality' of taking the Word of God into countries which prohibit its entrance. However, I cannot practice any deceit or tell any lies in the course of carrying Bibles across borders. I personally would never use false bottoms in suitcases or secret compartments in vehicles. The dynamic and resourceful Brother Andrew has published a small booklet entitled *The Ethics of Smuggling*. He gives some notable instances of how God helps those who keep God's rules to get Scripture across the borders in a God-honouring way. I think the word 'smuggling' is a most unfortunate misnomer and would discourage its use altogether in this connection.

Is the need for Bibles as great as we imagine?

With eight hundred million Chinese and two hundred and fifty million Russians the answer must be, Yes! In Eastern Europe the picture varies. For example both Poland and Yugoslavia have Bible bookshops. Some countries import Bibles from the West while others print limited quantities of their own. Speaking generally there never seem quite enough to go round. In Bulgaria there are only a few thousand Protestants and I did hear reports in some places that they had sufficient for their needs. But what about the nine million Bulgars who have probably never seen a Bible? In Rumania where the Protestant minority is much larger the need is still great in spite of the large numbers already taken in.

What can we do to help—should we protest to governments and things like that?

I always get asked this question! Firstly a word of caution. We are not worthy to help them, so let us rid ourselves of any sense of superiority based on the deceitfulness of riches. Just because we have more 'things' than they do we should beware of a patronising attitude. Secondly it is important to have the clearest possible knowledge of their real situation, so do try to be as well informed as you can. Only then can you know what they need. This means contacting those who regularly visit these countries to get true up to date information. Thirdly be prepared to take their advice on what is needed rather than some cherished notion or prejudice of your own! The main needs are spiritual links with the West (hence the importance of personal visits), Bibles, Bible-study literature, money and sometimes articles like typewriters, tape recorders and cassettes. Due to a rise in living standards second-hand clothing is less and less in demand. British clothing is still very good value for money and new garments can be taken out by those who make the visits. Protests to Governments are valid where citizens have been illegally denied their rights. The Apostle Paul did not always insist on his rights and neither should we. He seemed to be guided by what was for the greater glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel. Clearly his sometimes being in prison turned out unto the furtherance of the Gospel (Phil. 1:12). I know two men of apostolic character who were literally converted in prison! Protests should be made sparingly therefore and as the result of much hard thinking and earnest prayer.

Reformation in the Realm of Work

by Rod Badams

WORK IS A WORD WHICH THE UNGODLY TEND TO DISLIKE, BUT IT SHOULD be a welcome word to the Christian. In its brevity it is comprehensive. Here in a single syllable is summed up the greater part of the earthly activity of man.

In Scripture it is an honourable word. The earliest reference describes God's creative acts—'On the seventh day God ended his work which he had made' (Gen. 2:2). The closing verses of the Bible speak of work, 'Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be' (Rev. 22:12).

The word has many meanings, but we are going to consider only one: work in the sense of employment, or more broadly, occupation.

We will look at the subject in five divisions, each of which reflects work as very significant and indispensable to the Christian. 1. Work as inevitable (which includes the biblical and historical perspective). 2. Work as a calling. 3. Work as a discipline. 4. Work as a means of provision, and, 5. Work as a link with the world.

1. **Work as inevitable**

Every man since Adam has been born a workman. Working is a more basic function to man than eating. Paul's comment to the Thessalonians comes with force, 'This we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat' (2 Thess. 3:10). That is not the mere assertion of a man. Here we have the authority of God who made work a fact of life.

After the fall and Adam's banishment from Eden, God told Adam. 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground' (Gen. 3:17,19). By the sin of Adam and the curse of God work became inescapable. Man was compelled to the plough, to the hunting-knife, or to the workbench. Work and life were joined together. Work became more than a steady punishment for sin. It was a requirement, as vital as breathing, to man's fallen nature.

It has been rightly said that 'All the development of man's gifts and powers, the satisfaction of his nature, and the service of his God, demand noble and responsible work.'[1]

The tablets of stone on Sinai had imbedded into them the principle of work. 'Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work' (Ex. 20:9).

The discoveries of 3,500 years and all the labour saving devices of our century in particular cannot weaken or out-date that indelible statute.

As we go right back to the dawn of history we find that not only the necessity of work, but the style of it was recognised. Cain was a tiller of the ground and Abel a keeper of sheep. Each had a distinctive occupation, and this division of labour has been a key to the survival of communities. Work has always been characterised by interdependence. Initially occupations were basic. Nimrod and Esau were hunters, Noah was a husbandman, and Enoch, who built a city (Gen. 4:17) was clearly the earth's first town planner. It was not long however before specialist skills had an undisputed place in the community. Jabal (Gen. 4:20) was a cattle herdsman; his brother Jubal (4:21) a musician, while his step-brother Tubalcain (4:22) trained those who made sharp instruments out of brass and iron.

Lamech, wicked though he was, recognised the bondage to work in which man inevitably lay. In naming Noah, which means Comfort, Lamech said: 'This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed' (5:29).

The breaking-up of working life into individual skills, trades and professions quickly developed. The ancient civilisations such as Egypt and Babylon were complex in character and specialisation. Nebuchadnezzar's orchestra seemed as sophisticated as any we have today (Dan. 3:5). In the New Testament we find that Joseph was a carpenter (Matt. 13:55), Simon a tanner (Acts 9:43), Aquila a tentmaker (Acts 18:3), Alexander a coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14), and Zenas a lawyer (Titus 3:13). There are also indirect references to a nurse (1 Thess. 2:7), tutors (Gal. 4:2), and servants, many of whom would be household slaves (Eph. 6:5).

Until the Industrial Revolution most occupations were of the self-employed type, involving the use of a personal skill or trade. The beginnings of modern technology in the 18th Century brought a new emphasis to a 'working class' and the status of employee.

The necessity of work has remained through the centuries. Our generation is beset with extraordinary problems with its nationalised industries, closed shop trade unions, bureaucracies in civil service and local government and enormous empires in health, education and social services. Competition between huge sectors of industry for higher wages and easier conditions is keen with little regard for the consequences. Never was there more urgent need for work to be invested with incentive and motive, and for toil to be regarded from the perspective of Christian teaching.

2. **Work as a calling**

By calling we mean the fulfilment of a specific function in life by any one person. Modern evangelicalism has thrown up difficulties by seeking to separate too distinctly those who occupy posts in ordinary secular work from those who embark upon so-called full-time Christian service. The

right course is to regard all callings as of equal worth before God. This was certainly the view of the Apostle Paul, and it was shared by the reformers, and later by Spurgeon. To return to this proper view of calling there is a need to regard secular work more nobly than is at present the case. Also we need to reduce the level of importance with which we credit much full-time Christian activity.

God appoints men to special offices within the local church, such as pastors, elders and deacons. But many of these pursue a trade or profession as Paul did at Corinth, and as does any other Christian who is not called to special office within the local church.

The recognition that callings are of equal worth will remove many problems for those who might otherwise be persuaded that they will never grow to maturity nor be useful to God unless they give up their secular work and abandon themselves to some full-time Christian opportunity. Reformation in the sense of re-forming our thinking according to the scriptures is urgently needed in this realm.

Full-time opportunities exist in abundance, providing scope for young people to travel the world, 'praying in' their many air fares and the money for their keep. The glamour of it all encourages the giving. Frequently the wanderers return after a year or less with no clarity as to their real calling in life.

Real calling unites the farmer and the nurse, the civil servant and the teacher, the hotel worker and the local government officer, the pastor and the plasterer, in an assurance that God has welded them into his purposes. In this light no occupation is too mean.

Calvin regarded an understanding of calling as important to the believer's stability and comfort. He is well worth quoting at length:

> The Lord enjoins every one of us, in all the actions of life, to have respect to our own calling. Therefore, lest all things should be thrown into confusion by our folly and rashness, he has assigned distinct duties, to each in the different modes of life. And that no-one may presume to overstep his proper limits, he has distinguished the different modes of life by the name of callings. Every man's mode of life is a kind of station assigned him by the Lord, that he may not be always driven about at random. In everything the call of the Lord is the foundation and beginning of right action. He only who directs his life to this end will have it properly framed; because, free from the impulse of rashness, he will not attempt more than his calling justifies, knowing that it is unlawful to overlap the prescribed bounds.
>
> In our cares, toils, annoyances and other burdens, it will be no small alleviation to know that all these are under superintendence of God. Everyone in his particular mode of life will, without repining, suffer its inconveniences, cares, uneasiness, and anxiety, persuaded that God has laid on the burden. This too will afford admirable consolation, that in following your proper calling, no work will be so mean and sordid as not to have a splendour and value in the eyes of God.[2]

Calvin's firm but gracious attitude to calling may be an encouragement to many who are bearing the brunt of wearisome work, but who know it

is their calling. If we have recognised our gifts and our natural inclinations, then we shall know our calling.

Spurgeon, hard hitting on many matters, saved some of his bluntest statements for the subject of calling. He said that as a rule it was bad for a man to change his calling.

> By frequent changes a man becomes jack-of-all-trades and master of none. Transplanted trees never make much growth. Before their roots have well searched the soil of one spot they have to begin upon another, and when they are getting pretty nearly at home in the second garden they have to migrate again. The tree is usually stunted and the fruit is scanty. A man may be everything and yet be nothing.

He warned against leaving an understood and mastered work for one which was totally new. 'What becomes of all those years of apprenticeship? What becomes of the adaptation to the sphere which it takes so many years to acquire?' he asked.

Spurgeon's strongest words of all were against those who imagined they could suddenly strut into a ministry of the Gospel as a church leader. 'A man may glorify God in his calling, and have money to give and time to spare for the cause of truth; but if he enters the paid ministry he may not glorify God, he may have no money to give, and his time may not be worth a brass farthing to anybody.'

Without being fitted and qualified for such a ministry, it would be 'little better than slavery with a fine name to it', said Spurgeon. With penetrating insight and good sense he would dissuade the aspirant who was unfit and unsuited for such an office!

While our callings will be in line with our aptitudes and skills, there are other guidelines which if followed will steer us clear of danger.

i. Our calling will be *honourable.* God will not lead us into a calling which by its nature is an offence against himself and his Name, or which infringes his law. Thus the Christian will not want to be involved in work connected with gambling, pornography, beauty contests, prize-fighting, or which involves blasphemy, dishonesty, or desecration of the Lord's day.

Paul wrote to Titus, 'Let ours (our people) also learn to profess honest trades, for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful' (Tit. 3:14). That must be our guide too.

ii. Our calling will be *purposeful.* Although our work is not an end in itself, it will be purposeful. It will fulfil a need, perform a genuine service, or have a recognised usefulness in the world. Most occupations will meet one or other of these criteria, but there are some which serve no useful purpose, such as those which employees are forced to occupy by virtue of overmanning agreements. The Christian's calling will be a useful one.

iii. Our calling will be *reasonable.* Work is our calling, but it is a means to something better. It holds us in necessary check while we are on

earth as we prepare for glory. Although it is important, it is a lesser matter in itself than our growth in grace and our sanctification, and our fellowship. Because of this, the Christian must guard against overriding ambition in a secular employment, and against a work commitment which is so great as to cut him off effectively from his local church and identification with it. There is no area of doubt here. The spiritual is more important than the temporal. The man who remains untaught by continued absence from the church through work commitments is grieving his heavenly Father, and is falling far short of that high calling to which he is called. Those involved in inter-continental travel and in some areas of medical work can easily commit irreparable spiritual harm to themselves while following motives which are worthy, but not worthy to be placed above God himself!

3. **Work as a discipline**

Work is above all a discipline to man. Paul told the Thessalonians: 'We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.' John Caiger declares, 'man in his sinful condition needs the discipline and the concentration of work to impose a restraint upon his self-indulgence and evil passions'.[3]

Paul found it necessary to be stern with the Thessalonians ordering them to work for their own and their families' keep and to lead an orderly life in so doing. Any person not heeding the apostolic injunction to work was to be withdrawn from. 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us' (2 Thess. 3:6). No quarter is to be given to loafers!

Those traditions, much prized by Paul, were the traditions of self-support, 'We wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you' (2 Thess. 3:8).

Thomas Watson was eloquent on this fundamental issue: 'We must be diligent in our calling. Religion does not seal warrants to idleness. God sets all his children to work. They must not be like the lilies which toil not, neither do they spin. Heaven indeed is a place of rest. There the saints shall lay aside all their working tools, and take the harp and viol, but while we are here, we must labour in a calling. God will bless our diligence, not our laziness.'[4]

Referring to the fourth petition in the Lord's Prayer, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' Watson said, 'It is our bread, being gotten by honest industry. There are two sorts of bread which cannot be called our bread—the bread of idleness and the bread of violence.'[5]

Man is made for the discipline of work, and idleness spoils him. A man's attitude to work will be a measure of his maturity and his grasp of life's realities.

John Caiger writes, 'If you find in your heart a faulty attitude to work,

pray that God will renew your mind and show you the unspeakable blessing that work can be. A man may measure the blessing of God upon his life by an increasing capacity for work.'[6]

4. **Work as a means of provision**

We have already referred to Paul's determination to be chargeable to no-one in the exercising of his ministry. He did not mean it would be wrong for him to be assisted by the churches to which he ministered, but he was concerned to set the highest standards as an example. 'Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us' (2 Thess. 3:9).

It is our responsibility to provide for ourselves, and in doing so God often gives us the means of supplying the needs of others. A major way of ministering to others is through the liberal exercise of hospitality. The New Testament impresses us by the many references to hospitality, which is both a ministry and a beneficence. 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares' (Heb. 13:1).

Firstly and mainly, the reward for honest work is the means to provide for self and family. There is no other honest way for these our needs to be supplied. Though our homes, food and clothing are a provision of God, it is by our labours that, with our conscience free of debt, we are able to have possession of these things. We have earned them, not for smug reflection upon the abundance of things possessed, but for our use to God's glory.

Provision is a daily matter. It is only when we try to store up too much for the future that our troubles begin. The Israelites found the manna soured when they tried to gather it in more than daily helpings. The rich man sat back to ponder his increasing wealth and plan barns and stores of larger volume being so foolish as to overlook provision for his soul which would be demanded of him that very night.

What of the unemployed? What about social security? This must remain open to question. But the spiritual necessity is not that a man labours lucratively, but that he labours at all. Any unemployed man who works diligently about some unpaid calling has earned the right to some other provision for which he has not specifically worked. But this is not a soft option. As we have been reminded Paul makes the point quite clear that 'if any would not work, neither should he eat' (2 Thess. 3:10).

5. **Work as a link with the world**

For most of us our work brings us into closer contact with our fellow men than any other part of our life. Every day we are involved with employers, colleagues, employees, customers, clients, representatives, tradesmen, suppliers, advisers, and many other people in ordinary walks of life. This involvement has increased as a result of the development of organised industry.

In Paul's day it was every man for his trade, and he was his own craftsman, handyman, marketing manager, accountant and clerk. Now most of us work with others in the cut and thrust of business life. Can there be a better place in which to be? For witness, for preaching, for conversation, for action, for attitude, for patience, for learning, for understanding, for caring, for diligence, and for example, our work can be our pulpit.

To quote John Caiger, 'Servants of Christ should not see work as a burden to be evaded, but as an opportunity to serve their Master in any situation. There are many Christians who seem to divorce their Christian life from their working life. Their Christian life is all fellowship, testimony, Bible study and prayer—while their working life is something different.'[7]

Our work is also a means to greater understanding of men. It is often in a workplace that we can see that 'men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil' (John 3:19). At work we are in touch with the world as it is. We are not just holding on to theories. Men are themselves at their work. At work we ourselves are often made aware of our own shortcomings which is helpful in as much as we are motivated to correct ourselves.

Work is a link with the world for witness and for our learning. It is also an opportunity for involvement.

The Christian's involvement with unbelievers is an issue which is important, but it requires the utmost clarity of thought. The question is often asked, 'what involvements are legitimate?'

How far should we go to involve ourselves with individuals? Each case is different, but it is important not to waste time and energy. If God is convicting a man, that man will seek after the things of God, and will accept a ready invitation to a meal at home, or to a Sunday or midweek ministry. He will not need to be nagged or coerced into accepting an invitation.

Conclusion

We have seen that work is far from incidental in the life of a Christian. It is a great arena of constant practical reformation. From the beginning when a calling has to be decided upon, until that time when retirement is appropriate the realm of work is a world of constant application, vigilance, opportunity, fulfilment and service. May reformation in this realm of work be advanced everywhere to the glory of God and the wellbeing of man!

[1] 'Back to Work,' a tract based on Luke 2:20 by John A. Caiger.
[2] *Institutes*, Book Three, Chapter 10, 'How to use the present life and the comforts of it'.
[3] *ibid.*
[4] Beatitudes, chapter 20, *Exhortations to Christians as they are children of God.*
[5] *The Lord's Prayer*, Banner of Truth, p. 202.
[6] *ibid.*
[7] *ibid.*

Among lovers of books are a few who attain unusual skill in finding rare acquisitions. Peter Cresswell of 12 *Silverdale Road, Hull, Yorks., HU6 7HQ., has established an enterprise whereby he is able to assist others. As intimated in the article this is a very serious business for avid students. From these paragraphs you should be able to see whether you are in that category.*

Old Books and their Hunters

'BIBLE HUNTERS? CLERGYMEN ARE THE WORST THIEVES IN THE ANTIQUARIAN book trade,' said Paul Minet at the opening of his rare-books shop in London's Piccadilly recently. 'They go berserk when surrounded by lovely books.' Ignoring his opening charge, there is an undeniable truth in his final assertion. When it comes to old-book fever, the servant of God generally manifests the highest temperature! This is easily explainable. There is no truth like Bible-truth to grip the mind and grasp the heart. Shut the truth in a book and you necessarily make the Christian man a Bibliomaniac.

It has been said with some accuracy that you can judge a minister by his library, or lack of it. Books are second only to the spoken word in the acquisition of knowledge. 'I covet nothing,' boasted Richard Baxter, 'save books.' Perhaps he tempted providence by so saying for it is well known how the good man was nearly killed one day by a score of goodly folios, when a shelf collapsed in his study.

I write as one who has the book 'fever', with no great will to get better again, though with Baxter in mind I do take the precaution of metal shelving! Book selling is also my trade, and these few lines are penned with the aim of encouraging others in the obtaining of good secondhand theological books, especially any who may be embarking upon library building for the first time. I am also mindful of foreign visitors to our shores who are seeking to avail themselves of our literary heritage.

The antiquarian book world seems to attract four main kinds to its fellowship. There is the dealer, the investor, the collector and the reader. Ignoring the first, we may remark thus of the ensuing three. The *investor* is one who feels the need to hedge himself against inflation by putting his worldly wealth into a heavenly treatise. For some people 'profit' will always be a dirty word, whilst others believe it is a way to be good stewards of their money and to provide for their own. So many invest their hard-earned pounds only to find that they have put them into a pocket with holes in. The antiquarian book is a safe investment, for with age it can only get more valuable. Indeed it is a doubly good investment for it can be called upon to benefit the soul, as well as guard the future necessities of the body! The *collector* at his best is someone who seeks to pursue a theme; at his worst he simply has the urge to hoard. Whether at his best or his worst, I do not see that he has need to reproach himself overmuch. 'Ah' some will say, 'he never reads what he buys.' Is this really a crime? Is it a sin for a Christian to have an interesting and worth-while hobby? Presumably none would quarrel with the Christian who wishes to collect say postage-stamps or wild flowers. Let another brother be free to collect literature unmolested. But the *reader* is the wisest of all. The book is primarily written to be read. Most of my readers will be in this category and I do not need to describe you to yourselves!

Where in these islands may these three groups hope to have success in their

searching? The question can be answered only rather generally. The North has no literary heritage and the Eastern Counties are something of a barren wilderness to all except those who live there and have ample time to visit country markets and village antique shops. London, the East Midlands, the South Coast and a small part of the West country yield the highest output of old books. The Scots guard their treasures closely, while the Welsh have none (with the notable exception of Hay-on-Wye, Town of Books). Northern Ireland, though promising, has problems of its own, and is somewhat too isolated to be of much benefit to most people.

There are, I suppose, three main ways of building your library. The obvious and popular is to get out and about. Most cities and towns have something which approaches a secondhand book shop. This will always be the most interesting way of lining your book shelves. There is always the possibility, second to none for excitement, of unearthing some old Puritan treasure at a tenth of its real value. But much time can be wasted, much energy spent, and a lot of money lost in travelling, with little to show at the end of it all.

Another way, therefore, is to sit in the comfort of your home and browse through a trade catalogue. Of the many hundreds of book-sellers in the British Isles, a large majority issues some sort of list of books for sale from time to time. Indeed, many rely on this method entirely, and thus avoid the heavy overheads of shop premises. To follow this line, it is really necessary to obtain a copy of *The Directory of Dealers in Second-hand and Antiquarian Books in the British Isles* (Shepard Press, London). The only way to obtain trade catalogues is to write and request them. Of course, postal dealing is getting increasingly expensive and some dealers are reluctant to increase their mailing lists. Others have begun to make a small charge for their service, but the majority are still happy to mail you free, relying upon your sincere intentions to become a customer!

Advertising for the books you want is perhaps the last method resorted to. Once again it can be a costly business, though the columns of the religious press are a good deal cheaper than many secular publications. I have found two annoying little problems in this realm. The first is the legion of those who cannot understand your advertisement and who repeatedly offer you modern titles when in reality you had asked for theology of the seventeenth century in the original. The second problem is that most correspondents require you to 'make them an offer'. You are obliged thus to become both buyer *and* seller—a thankless task! The telephone is far superior to the letter for this purpose, and in most cases a fair and satisfactory deal for both parties can be reached.

There are several Christians engaged in the world of antique books, and not surprisingly they turn their knowledge to good account and specialise in theology. Mr. Robinson of Academy Books, Southsea, is well known. Others include Mr. Jan Faherty of Bristol, Mr. Hill of the Theological Book Trust at Doncaster and Messrs. A. M. and S. M. Butcher of London. My own speciality is in English theology of the Reforming period, with the emphasis upon the Reformers, Puritans and Non-Conformists. To this I add also dealings in early printed Bibles. My method is the same as above, to issue catalogues periodically to interested parties both at home and abroad. On rare occasions only do I have the pleasure of welcoming a collector-in-the-flesh to this obscure corner of the finest county in England.

Someone may ask how to start to collect books. Clearly a rudimentary

knowledge of authors and prices is desirable. Most of us have begun, and continue unashamedly, with Spurgeon's *Commenting and Commentaries* (Banner of Truth Trust). To master this little book is to make yourself conversant with the best theological authors of the last 400 years—and the worst! There is always a real element of personal taste concerning which books you prefer. For example, I cannot abide the sugar-sweet Rutherford, while others would give him the throne. For my own part, I would give a high place to Joseph Caryl—amongst the Puritans at least. His main contribution to posterity was twelve very solid quartos on the book of Job.

When it comes to what price to pay for an item, it is hard to give an answer. Spurgeon has lost his usefulness at this point. Those who seek a copy of Attersoll on Numbers for '10-14/-' will search in vain! It is worth noting that the antique theological book has two different values; that which obtains in the open market of the book world generally and that which obtains amongst Reformed Christians. They are not always identical. As a general principle, a book is worth what someone else is prepared to pay for it. This is a rapidly changing factor in todays inflationary situation.

Of course, many Christians will be content with the modern re-publication of an old Christian classic. They are not to be criticised, though buyers necessarily limit their scope in this way. For many, however, there remains the fatal fascination for the first edition. There is a certain thrill in handling a book whose well-worn pages were once being read by a godly soldier in the armies of Oliver Cromwell. An indescribable pleasure can be had from reading the same Bible which John Gill used for his private devotions, bearing the evidence of his meditations in the margins. There is a certain awesomeness in handling a thirteenth-century hand-written Bible rich in illumination, knowing that you hold in your hand the work of one man's entire working life, painstaking in its detail, costly in its devotion, wonderful in its preservation. Such a production need fear no modern rival, for it is to all, save the blind and boorish, a thing of beauty and a lasting joy forever.

CAREY CONFERENCES

The Carey Ministers' Conference has been arranged to take place at Bristol from 4th-7th January 1977.

The Carey Summer Conference at Pilgrim Hall, Uckfield, Sussex, is now fully booked. Day visitors are welcome but need to book in advance. All are welcome to the public evening sessions, 10th-13th August inclusive, when pastor Bill Payne of Burlington, Canada, will be the preacher. Speakers at this conference: Douglas Jones, David Kingdon, Bernard Honeysett and Erroll Hulse.

The Carey Summer Conference at Clarendon School, Haines, Bedfordshire, 16th-21st August. A few places are still available. Speakers: David Kingdon, Bill Payne, David Straub, Erroll Hulse and Colin Richards.

For details write to John Rubens, 36 Longden Close, Northwood End, HAINES, Beds. Telephone (023 066) 440.

Norman H. Street, Pastor of The Berean Baptist Church, Flint, Michigan, describes how he came into a new world.

A Pastor Celebrates a Rich Discovery

SOME MONTHS AGO I READ *A History of Fundamentalism in America* BY DR. George W. Dollar. This book, published in 1973, is very unsatisfactory for many reasons.

In chapter fourteen the author delineates the dangers he sees as threatening the future of fundamentalism. Among these he draws attention to 'a new threat which has emerged within fundamentalism itself'. Dr. Dollar here refers to what he terms 'militant and rigid Calvinism'. So, what was once the faith of Baptists (London and Philadelphia Confessions) is now seen as a menace!

Most of the millions of Baptists in the world today undoubtedly imagine that what they believe is what Baptists have always believed. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The fact is that Baptists have lost a whole body of doctrine that was the spiritual meat and drink of their forefathers in the faith. How one who has been a pastor for thirty years was awakened to this astounding realisation is the subject of what follows.

For fifteen years I pastored an undenominational evangelistic church in Niagara Falls, Canada. Then followed nearly three years of deputation work for a well-known faith mission, which included evangelism and Bible teaching ministry throughout the Western Canadian provinces, the Caribbean and the continent of South America.

During this time certain executive decisions were made which I could not endorse. Eventually this led to my resignation. It was difficult and painful for all concerned because we deeply loved and respected one another.

After much waiting upon the Lord I accepted a call to the Walkerville Baptist Church in Windsor, Canada, where we spent ten happy years. When I came to Walkerville, although I had never pastored a Baptist Church before, there was no need to change my message or methods. I had preached in many Baptist churches and had enjoyed close fellowship with Baptist pastors through the years.

Nevertheless, I had read neither Baptist history nor Baptist theology to any notable extent. I felt now that since God had brought me into the Baptist fellowship, it would not be pleasing to him that I remain relatively ignorant of their great heritage. So, with this desire to learn more, I got busy.

Those Baptists!

The more I read the more convinced I became that Baptists do hold certain truths that have been the secret of their power and fruitfulness. There are other groups who hold these truths in part but it is Baptists who have suffered through history for these doctrines. For a long, long time there have been Baptists who took a courageous stand for truth and for principles that cost them great inconvenience, imprisonment, and in some cases, their lives. The story

of Roger Williams and the Baptists in early America deserves to be better known.

But Baptists are sadly something else when it comes to their divisions and shameful in-fighting. Dr. George Dollar's book is a disappointing revelation of the lack of sanctification amongst prominent Baptist preachers. Baptists have stressed justification but they have failed in preaching practical sanctification.

In spite of all this, Baptist churches have experienced worldwide growth, and in America it has been almost phenomenal. Not all of that growth has been good. A great part of it must be attributed to the substitution of entertainment for worship and a 'cheap grace' gospel for the biblical doctrines of grace. Easy-believism may grow large memberships, but if a church of two thousand members sees less than half present on Sunday morning, and a tenth or so on Sunday evening, and less than one hundred in prayer meeting, who can say that is good? The more reading I did, the more I travelled, the more I observed of Baptist pastors and their congregations, the more I began to realise that something must have gone wrong years ago. Comparing the record of Baptist history with things as they now are, I became convinced that the Baptist leaders, and their people along with them, had sold a good part of their birthright. They traded their great Calvinistic heritage for a mess of Arminian pottage.

Crucial Discoveries

The realisation that Baptists had lost something came with two discoveries. The first discovery was what the doctrines of the Calvinistic Reformers were. The second discovery was that most of the great Baptists of the past were Calvinists.

I had read John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, first as a boy and then later as a young pastor, but I had not read anything else of Bunyan's writings. I did not realise that *Pilgrim's Progress* was an allegory picturing a great Calvinistic doctrine—the preservation and the perseverance of the saints. Bunyan was showing that the true Christian, no matter what he suffers, no matter how the devil assails him, is going to reach the Celestial City. That was the doctrine undergirding the book but I did not realise this. I did not know that Bunyan was a Calvinist. If some one had told me that he was, I would not have known exactly what he meant.

I had read forty or fifty of Spurgeon's sermons and found him speaking of the fact that he was a Calvinist, but I did not know what he meant by that, although I thought I did. You see, I always thought I was a Calvinist because I believed in 'eternal security'. I thought that the Plymouth Brethren (among whom I was raised) were Calvinists; and I now know that there was Calvinism in the *Believer's Hymn Book*, and considerable Calvinistic content in the preaching and teaching I heard as a boy, but I did not really know what Calvinism was. But as I read more of Spurgeon, including his sermons in which he would devote a whole message to the subject of election or predestination or particular redemption or providence, I began to see what he meant. By the time I had read through *The Park Street Pulpit* I saw very clearly just what the doctrines of grace really embraced.

In the meantime I had finished reading almost all of Strong's theology and every word of Calvin's *Institutes*. It is not easy for a busy pastor to make time for

so much reading. The works just referred to comprised two thousand, five hundred pages which were read early in the mornings and late at nights because there were pastoral calls to be made, sermons to prepare, Board and Committee meetings to attend, etc. Around this same period I read, for the first time in my life, the great *Westminster Confession of Faith.* When I had finished reading that document I wondered how it could be that I had been a pastor so long and had never read such a marvellous statement as that.

Then a little later, I read the *London Baptist Confession of Faith* of 1689. The Westminster was Presbyterian, the London was Baptist and they were different, of course, because in certain places the Baptists deleted what was in the Westminster and wrote statements they believed to be more scriptural. But where they could agree with the Westminster Statement, it stood as written. The *Philadelphia Confession of Faith* was, of course, the American transcript of the *London Confession* and in its opening pages is one of the most gracious things you will ever read: the Baptists are explaining to the Presbyterians that they simply could not agree with them in all matters but that they loved them in the Lord and valued their stand for the great truths of the faith.

About this time I read Arthur Pink on *The Sovereignty of God* and Lorraine Boettner's book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination.* Then followed many hours of reading Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield and other great American theologians. Now why was I doing all this reading? And why was I wrestling with the scriptures and with theology as never before in my life? It was because of one thing: I had to know the truth.

Prejudice and the Doctrines of Grace

Many years before, a man in a large book store in Toronto, Canada, tried to sell me Calvin's *Institutes* and I would not buy them. I said, 'That is Presbyterianism. I don't want it.' So you see, my mind was closed by prejudice. Thus the years passed until one day in the good providence of God I was in a Conference of Baptist pastors in Canada, and one of the young men who had been preaching (John Reisinger, then pastor of Long Branch Baptist Church, Toronto) in talking with me afterwards, along with some others, said: 'Do you believe in the doctrines of grace?' I replied: 'Well, I believe in salvation by grace, but I don't know that I understand what you mean by the phrase *the doctrines of grace.*' As we talked, and as I heard these doctrines expounded in other conferences I began to realise that my understanding of the scriptures and my preaching of the gospel compared with these men's was quite different. In some matters the differences were irreconcilable, and yet we were all Baptist preachers!

If they had the truth about grace then my gospel was incorrect, incomplete, and on the whole my understanding of the scriptures bearing on this great subject left a lot to be desired. On the other hand, if I was right, then they were wrong. So this drove me to study and much prayer, seeking the Lord for light and direction. At last, everything began to fall into place.

Strange Omission

I had read considerably in church history over a period of some years before I realised that there was a strange omission. It was not a conspiracy of silence but rather an oversight. Historians never bother to tell you very much, if

anything, about the doctrines involved in the various issues of history. They tell you what people did but they do not tell you why they did it. I was not unaware of the history of the Reformation in Germany, France and Switzerland. I had read three or four accounts of it by excellent writers. I knew that the Reformers were opposed to the unscriptural doctrines of Rome. I knew also that they were against the practices of Rome, the sale of indulgences and the veneration of relics. So I knew what the Reformers were against, but exactly what they were *for*—that I could not discover. I had read the history of the Reformation in England but I did not know what the doctrines of the Puritans were because the historians do not go into that. So, one can read all that history and still not know what those people believed. I suppose the writers of history expected us to read the great Puritan writers such as Owen, Flavel, Goodwin, and of course, the writings of the Reformers themselves: Calvin, Luther, etc. But this I had not done.

Although I knew that Spurgeon loved the Puritans and that he read them constantly, I simply did not realise that all these great men of God, back to the Reformation, were Calvinists. I read the thrilling story of the Huguenots in France, and of their sufferings in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve. And I knew that the Covenanters of Scotland died because they would not consent to the notion that the king of England was the king of the church in England, Scotland, or anywhere else.

But I did not know exactly what they believed. I read the biographies of great missionaries like Judson, Carey, and John G. Paton, but I did not know they were Calvinists.

The Anabaptists

I realise now that most of what I read about the Anabaptists was misleading. They were pictured as the 'lunatic fringe' of the Reformation. The truth is that the Anabaptists got a bad name because of a small fanatical element in their group, and because prejudiced historians would not tell the whole story. The Anabaptists could have taught the Reformers much about believer's baptism and the church as the 'gathered out' people of God, but those stubborn leaders of the Reformation would not accept Anabaptist doctrines because the Reformers believed in infant baptism and in a state church. They believed that the whole nation should be Christian and that citizens should be compelled by law to obey the scriptures and the rules of the church. Christian cities—Christian provinces —Christian nations—such were their goal. But Anabaptists rejected all of this as an unscriptural notion.

It is one of the bitter, incredible ironies of history that in their attitude toward the Anabaptists, the Reformers took the same position as the Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholics hated the Anabaptists and so did the Reformers. Instead of recognising that these men were brethren in the Lord who, in some Biblical matters, had a better understanding than themselves, they persecuted them as though they were heretics. So it was that men like Hubmaier, the Swiss Anabaptist, died for their convictions.

In spite of such determined opposition, Anabaptist influence spread all over the continent. English Baptists assimilated the doctrines of the Reformation insofar as they accorded with the scriptures, while rejecting those things which they believed to be errors: elements of Romanism still clung to by the Reformers.

It was not long before there were strong Baptist churches in England led by men of God such as Kiffin and Keach, who set them on this solid Reformed foundation.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon belonged to a later generation and by his ministry the teachings of the Puritans were popularised. His printed sermons went all over the world, so that Baptist pastors and congregations everywhere were strengthened greatly. But not understanding this history, I did not know how much Baptists owe to the 'Reformers and their stepchildren', to use Verduin's phrase. While many denominations received a rich legacy from the Reformation, the Baptists got the very best because of the Anabaptist influence.

You are probably wondering how any pastor could be ignorant of so much truth. My first answer I have already given. The historians and biographers provide a great picture of events but a very poor explanation of the doctrines involved.

My second explanation: I was ignorant as to what Calvinism really is because instead of reading the great Calvinistic theologians and the Puritans, I was reading the books that filled the shelves of Christian book stores. These were the sermons and expositions of men whose names were household words in my youth. I am thinking about Dr. Harry Ironside, W. R. Newell, Arno C. Gabelein, Sale Harrison and many others, all of whom I heard preaching in the city of Toronto. I was fairly well read in the Plymouth Brethren writers such as Charles MacIntosh, Grant, Kelly, Rideout, Scott, Mauro, Tatham, etc. And of course, I had read considerably of G. Campbell Morgan, Graham Scroggie, Alexander McLaren, Alexander Whyte, F. B. Meyer, Andrew Murray, De-Haan, Chafer, Strombeck, Sauer, G. H. Lang and many others. But while these good men taught me much precious truth, none of them taught me the great doctrines which were once the foundation of Baptist belief.

Birthright Lost

Looking back on those earlier years I realise now that while evangelicals—Baptists included—were hearing so much of 'dispensational truth' and 'prophetic truth', they were hearing almost nothing of the great doctrines that had been the theme of preaching in years past. A few men like Dr. T. T. Shields of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto were preaching the doctrines of grace; but men of his stature and influence holding these truths, were few and far between on this continent. In his book *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, Dr. Dollar is really sketching for us a profile which turns out to be that of an impostor. The face of true Baptist fundamentalism is to be seen in the *London Baptist Confession* and in the preaching of men such as Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

Baptists really did trade their birthright for a mess of Arminian pottage. One has only to read the old *London Confession* of Baptists of 1689 and compare it with the *New Hampshire Confession of Faith* to see that this is so. The *New Hampshire Confession* is so abbreviated that it does not do justice to the faith of our fathers. It should be five times as long as it is. The great doctrines of grace are in it, but only those who know the doctrines can find them there, because the Confession is all so diminished.

As I began to see how much of our Baptist heritage has been lost I knew that I would have to cast my lot in with brethren who were deeply concerned about the

recovery of the gospel embodied in these truths. Then I learned that every year in Canada, U.S.A., and England conferences were being held where Baptist pastors gathered to listen to some of their finest preachers expound these truths. I have not attended many, but even so I have become acquainted with many Baptist preachers who love these great truths. It has been our privilege as pastor and people at Berean Baptist Church in Flint, Michigan, to host two such conferences, and they have been a great blessing.

(*Continued from page* 12)

> come, ye dying; come ye lost—ye who have been taught to feel your need of Christ; come, all of you—come now for Jesus bids you come; come quickly. Lord Jesus, draw them, draw them by thy Spirit! Amen.[23]

If we ask ourselves why is there a general absence of this pleading and urgent tone in gospel preaching today, I would suggest the answer largely lies in a neglect of the truth I have laid before you. This truth is either rejected or merely received with a head knowledge. I am convinced that once this reality is burned into our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we will begin to know something of the love and compassion seen in our Lord's ministry and in those whom he has mostly used in the centuries that have followed.

[1] *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 169. The expression 'passionless' obviously requires exposition but is outside the bounds of this study.
[2] *op. cit.*, p. 176.
[3] *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 174.
[4] *op. cit.*, pp. 454 and 457.
[5] *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, p. 239.
[6] *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, Vol. I, pp. 282-313.
[7] *ibid.*, pp. 283, 284.
[8] *op. cit.*, p. 286.
[9] *op. cit.*, p. 307.
[10] *ibid.*, pp. 316, 317.
[11] *ibid.*, pp. 318, 319.
[12] *Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 454.
[13] *ibid.*, p. 435.
[14] *ibid.*, p. 436.
[15] *ibid.*, pp. 444 and 445.
[16] *ibid.*, pp. 452 and 453.
[17] Vol. I, p. 455.
[18] To say that common grace if not resisted by the sinner would be equivalent to regenerating grace, is not the same as to say that common grace if assisted by the sinner would be equivalent to regenerating grace. In the first instance, God would be the sole author of regeneration; in the second he would not be. Vol. 2, p. 483.
[19] Vol. 3, p. 198.
[20] See p. 18.
[21] *Lectures to my Students*, p. 337.
[22] *Jay's Memoirs of the late Rev. Cornelius Winter*, pp. 20, 21.
[23] *New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. 2, p. 400.

The Wardrobe at Perth

From her inception six years ago the Perth Evangelical Church (committed to the 1689 Confession) has been worshipping in hired accommodation. No less than thirty-three properties have been investigated. Some of these were pursued intensely for purchase as a home for the church.

The thirty-third attempt proved fruitful. The relatively small sum required for a century old stone cottage was feasible and so the property, centrally and ideally situated, was secured.

Whilst the church is not endowed with the riches of this world the two elders are gifted in the practical arts of design and building construction. George Hillan is a professional builder and John Davison, our associate editor, an architect. With exceptional enthusiasm the members of the church and congregation commenced an assault on the old structure. The internal walls were removed to make way for a new sanctuary designed along the lines of the old meeting-house style.

The decor is extremely attractive, the central focus being upon the pulpit surrounded by pews to seat one hundred people. The pulpit may well be unique in church history for it is constructed from a large Victorian wardrobe cut down in height with the top forming a massive bookboard upon which the preacher has room to lay down all the reference books he may desire from Young's Concordance to Bunyan volume three! A variety of resonant sound effects can be obtained depending upon which part of the pulpit is struck!

These details are most relevant since several of our readers are found in small causes worshipping in hired accommodation. A property of one's own is a boon. Here is a small church (only fifteen members with an average congregation of about thirty-five) transforming an old structure into a new Jerusalem of their own at a total cost of only £4,500! As well as the sanctuary there is first floor accommodation in which an 'upper room' is used for communion. Cloakrooms are situated downstairs. There is space on the property for extensions. A valuer from an insurance company has estimated the replacement value for the renewed building (not counting the outer solid stone frame) to be £18,000. Anyone can see such value has accrued from willing hands and the affectionate use of talent and experience.

Pastors Seaton and Hulse preached to a capacity audience at the opening on the 6th March, pastor Seaton on the death of Christ, that death of all deaths being the foundation of the Church's creation. Pastor Hulse expounded on the theme of unity bringing home the fact that spiritual unity maintained and treasured in a local church is of priceless worth. He also urged a closer unity among the Reformed Baptists of Scotland whose inter-church support and mutual encouragement is of inestimable value in an ethos of religious sterility which unhappily characterises Scotland today.

Now that the church is settled, house-to-house evangelism has been renewed, not as though evangelistic activity ever ceased since local residents around the meeting house have observed the activities, have shown interest and now regard it as their place of worship.

The Sunday following the opening service the new meeting house was again packed, this time to witness a joint baptismal service of eight candidates, seven coming from neighbouring Stirling. A portable baptistry was used. The occasion was owned by the Lord. After the service one man professed salvation and one paedo-baptist young lady present changed her views on immersion. The sign ordained by Jesus, who himself emerged from a dipping in the Jordan, is not the terrible ordeal some would picture it to be!

The wardrobe at Perth and the building that contains it may well be a pattern for other churches at present homeless.

NUMBER 31 MAY-JUN 1976

Reformation Today is a bi-monthly magazine published by Cuckfield Baptist Church, Sussex.

Editor
ERROLL HULSE
5 Fairford Close, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 3EF.

Assistant Editor
IAN RANDALL
27 Ardingly Road, Cuckfield, Sussex. RH17 5HA.

Associate Editors
DAVID KINGDON, South Africa
7 Malaga, 12 Jacobson Drive, Lynwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.
JOHN DAVISON, Scotland.
23 Muircroft Terrace, Perth.
JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa.
22 Verbenia Street, Lynnwood Ridge, Pretoria 0002.
STUART FOWLER, Australia.
58 Adam Crescent, Montmorency, Victoria 3094, Australia.
WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.
110 State Road, Media, Penna 19063, U.S.A.

Agents
Agents to whom subscriptions should be sent.

BRITISH ISLES	*P.O. Box 106, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 1QL.*
AUSTRALIA	*Ray Levick, 25 Amaroo Avenue, Mt. Colah, N.S.W. 2079.*
NEW ZEALAND	*Michael Drake, P.O. Box 18,080, Glen Innes, Auckland 6.*
U.S.A.	*Bill Carey, 2707 Warm Springs Road, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania 16652.*
	Ron Edmonds, 4401 Rose Avenue, Long Beach, California 90807.
	J. W. Baker, Box 1061, Bay City, Texas 77414.
CANADA	*Max Latchford, 42 Hartfield Road, Islington, Ontario M9A 3C9.*
SOUTH AFRICA	*Martin Holdt, 7 Hebbes Street, Cambridge, East London.*

Subscriptions

BRITISH ISLES	£1.50
AUSTRALIA	A$3.00
U.S.A	U.S.$5.00
CANADA	C$5.00
SOUTH AFRICA	R3.00
NEW ZEALAND	N.Z.$3.00

Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".

Printed by Stanley L. Hunt (Printers) Ltd. Midland Road, Rushden, Northants